

This week, I held a hearing in the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee on the Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB), which was passed as part of the President's health care bill with the mission to "reduce the per capita rate of growth in Medicare spending." Two days later, I joined the rest of the Ways and Means Committee in passing [H.R. 452](#), a bill to repeal that board. IPAB is designed to consist of 15 unelected bureaucrats who will be directed to reduce Medicare spending so that it does not exceed pre-determined annual targets. While it may sound good to ensure fiscal responsibility, IPAB's proposals would be developed without any input from Medicare patients or their doctors, and they would automatically become law without any consideration by the people's elected representatives in Congress. There is a very real danger that IPAB would interfere with the care Medicare recipients receive from their doctors by cutting reimbursement rates for services that they feel are unnecessary or not "cost-effective" to levels that no physician could afford to offer them.

While health care debates often involve partisan divides these days, the possible harmful actions of IPAB have created bipartisan concern. As long as it is allowed to exist, access to care for seniors and those with disabilities will forever be in jeopardy. This limiting of care is inevitable once we let the government become more involved in our health care system, and we ultimately need to repeal President Obama's health care bill in its entirety and pursue reforms that empower rather than endanger Medicare beneficiaries. In the meantime, the action by the Ways and Means Committee to repeal this board is a good sign that Congress as a whole can work to eliminate IPAB, and I look forward to the consideration of this legislation by the full House of Representatives.